

HIS FACE

AND

HER FACE.

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A POEM,

BY MARY A. SMITH.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, March 17th 1881.

NEW YORK.

[Printed at 433 Eighth Avenue.]

1881.

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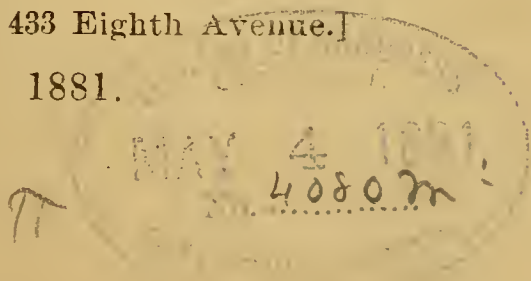
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PREFACE.

A demonstration of uncompromising single-heartedness, the author would here commemorate. She begs to name HENRY KIDDLE, who for the sake of his convictions—founded upon delusions though those convictions were—sacrificed a position as honorable as any in the land. Again she begs—begs not to be counted presumptuous by him whose honest bravery she holds to be unsurpassed by any one of his day, or any day.

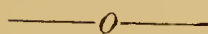
TO THE READER.

When compositions powerful, elegant, sweet—either and all combined—are abundant in literature, have you, reader, paid more than its value for this?

The heart of the author has, all of the days since she learned to think, been with them who were her fellow-strugglers for honest livelihood.

She now believes that she could do material good, had she means to work with. To gather—such means she submits, to you, this expanding of an incident from real domestic history.

HIS FACE AND HER FACE.



Impatiently the lady turned,
With mocks for her own sighs,
While anger on her clear cheek burned,
And in her large blue eyes ;
But then again the horror fell,
Wrath checked not sorrow long ;
“ I’ve lost his love—I know it well ;
I bear a bitter wrong.”

While back and forth across the floor,
She paced with changing tread—
Watching from pane the outer door,
By light from street lamp shed—
Her regal hight seemed higher still,
And scorn put foot on woe ;
When her pain o’ercame her will,
She bent as ’neath a blow.

The lady chose to have no light,
 Save what the live coals gave,
 Enough for her who bent her sight
 So fiercely on the pave :
 It lit the room, and showed that gold,
 And care, and love, and wit,
 Had made home 't were bliss to hold,
 If hearts for bliss were fit.

And now again she nears the pane,
 And laughs in bitter key ;
 At the door is Richard McKane—
 Grieving he shall not see.
 Idly swinging in cushioned chair,
 So Richard found his wife ;
 'Mazed he hears from the lady fair
 'Tones with scornfulness rife.

Kindly he answered words of flame,
 Wondering more and more ;
 Still the storm of bitterness came,
 Flooding him o'er and o'er.

“Magnanimous ! Mr. McKane,
 To leave me, by the fire ;
 ‘*A fearful blow,*’ you need not feign :
 I’m out when winds are higher.”

Bending, he looked into her face,
 Amazement in his own ;

“Yes, I have been out of the place,
 Of this, it seems, you ’ve known ;
 But, I am sure, you can’t think ill.

May with that fact belong,
 Though all not clear—do, shelly, still
 Let faith continue strong.”

“ Sir, you ’ve not been riding alone !

Doctor came in to tell

That his wife’s sister, Katie Stone,

Died last night at the Dell.

He met you, taking some one down,

Afterward the children

Saw you go up with Jennie Brown,

I waiting here till then ! ”

“ Waiting for what ? you are not plain.”

“ At my father’s, to-day,

We were to be—sunshine or rain,

Off by ten—did ’nt you say ? ”

“ Your mother’s birth-day :—but Rachell,

Although the morn was warm,

The blow I meant ”——“ You know full well,

We ’d time a-head the storm.”

“ I sent a line telling you why——”

“ By the man in the moon.”

Stone-like became his erst kind eye :

“ That *why* was here by noon.”

The words had scarcely left his lips,

When Ann came in :—“ Sure, mam,
This letter me memory slips ;

’Twas left this morn, by Sam.”

“ My office boy, Mrs. McKane.”

Setting the note on fire ;

“ Madam,” said he, “ now is it plain,

In part I’m not a liar ?”

“ Some reason for your coming not,

Which now ’twere vain to give,”

If I explain, may I be shot,

To-night, or while I live !”

“ I know enough.” “ Enough you v’e said,

’Tis well you ’re now at home,—

That the children are in their bed ;

Fine weather this to roam !”

“ Go or stay I had no option :

You wer’nt ruled by weather,

But by that bold faced——distraction !

I set aside for her.”

“ Yesterday she was *Jennie dear.*”

“ She ’s an audacious thing !

From such life I ’ll soon be clear :

You have danced, now go sing.”

“ Do go a-head and make stir :

See who ’ll be hardest hit.”

“ None to threaten me I ’ll suffer ;

Vile you are !—I’ll prove it.”

“ You ’ll prove yourself an idiot.

Drop this senseless fancy ;

Let unkind words be all forgot.

Play I’ve just come,——Shelly.”

“ Touch me, sir, and I ’ll strike your face.”

The words upon the air

She started—shuddered—oh ! disgrace !

So coarse—well might he stare.

What could she do ?—apologize ?

Say what ?—for not an inch

Had he moved back ! She read his eyes :

If she struck, he ’d not flinch.

Must she admit she ’d gone too far ?

What from this could save her ?

How best get out this horrid jar,

Seeing now no traitor ?

For to her soul a light now come,
 By which she saw him true ;
 A spirit foe had made blame
 The man whose worth she knew.

Her angel now that spirit chased,
 And bright again she grew ;
 Though shamed, confused, her task she
 faced,
 And wit thus helped her through.

He owned the faced that met his gaze ;
 She was his, he owned her :
 That 'twas so she'd gloried always,
 And through this she'd conquer.
 Her foolish rage, her wicked doubts,
 If these he would for give
 He never more should meet with flouts,
 As long as she should live.

Raising her hand she struck a blow,

Up her blushing cheek.

The lover-husband was not slow

To catch the meaning meek ;

He took the kiss so late refused,

And sinking in a chair

Drew to his knee, as he was used,

His Madam Golden Hair.

“ Shelly darling,—don’t be started ;—

T. J. Brown was killed to day.”

Shelly, white and crimson mottled,

Moved her trembling lips to say,

“ Jennie’s brother ! Dick ! killed how ? ”

“ But for a bale misplaced

And falling, he were dancing now —

Not lying coffin-cased.”

“ Died he under the fearful weight ?”

“ He breathed from nine till three.”

“ Lingered in a suffering state ?”

“ Oh, it was hard to see.”

“ To where the brother was lying,

You took the sister down ;—

She went to her brother dying ;—

Of earth her all ;—Tom Brown.”

“ Even in the first of the shock,

All at a glance was clear ;

But don't you see we 've 'scaped a rock

Nearly wrecking us, dear ?

To mark the faults which threatened love,

I shall set a beacon

The grave of quarrel first above :”

Stern he was as deacon.

“ Oh, Dick, I was a wicked fool,”

“ Not you so much as I :

I ought have told you,—keeping cool ;

For peace I did not try.

We never more shall have dispute,

And *this* is what secures—

You warmed my face, and I shall put

A coal of fire to yours.”

They stood before the glowing grate,

His arm bound both of hers,

He raised tae fire—she struck—to late ;

Just above his whiskers

Those showed a mark—blood breaking

Cruel whitish searing, [through.

“ Dick ! Oh, Dick McKane, how could

Soon I'll have it healing.” [you !

With loving haste the pain she lulled,
 Ease gave the tortured face ;
 Not many days and all was cured,—
 Gone, save a faintish trace.

“ Shelly, witch, why did you do it ?
 Wherefore mar that plan of mine ? ”
 “ Of the mark there ’s a tiny bit,
 If, indeed, we need a sign.”

“ Well, when a woman will, she will.”
 “ ’Twas my will, and duty,
 To keep Old Hair face handsome still—
 Rescue *my own beauty*.”

“ The beauty of a hairy face ! ”
 “ Yes, beauty !—splendid, Dick ;
 And I shall always know the place,
 By marks which grow there thick.”

“How so!—by marks which grow there

“Bad One, there’s the furrow, [thick?”
Made for time by your wicked trick ;

Roots which in it burrow,
Send beard out coarse and all awry :

You ’d no right to do so.”

“Shelly, once we said—you and I—
Life we ’d hate, trust laid low.

Six years ago, ’twas so we talked ;

Counts faith less now than then ?

Was that a dream which lured and mocked ?

Must it be forgotten ?

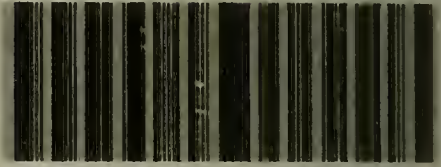
Girls, as I loved you when I wooed you,

I must love you till I die ;

That in this I’m ever true,

Witness scar below my eye.

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